

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF

HOUSTON-VICTORIA JAGUARS

-- Extensions of Remarks, May 22, 2008

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate The University of Houston--Victoria (UHV) Jaguars softball team on an amazing inaugural season. The Jaguars completed the season with a 32-18 record and finished fourth in Region VI of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, missing the national tournament by one slot.

The Jaguars faced a strong slate of contenders in the regular season, including 14 nationally recognized opponents, nine of which fell to the Jaguars. The team also defeated NCAA teams Houston Baptist University and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

"You've got to beat the best to be the best," head coach Keri Lambeth always tells her players, and the Jaguars showed they are more than capable of competing with the best. On March 17, the softball team ranked No.4 in 18-team Region VI in the first season poll based on play, marking the first rating of a UHV sporting team. On March 19, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) ranked the softball team No. 15 in the Nation. The team ended the season in the same impressive position.

The players didn't just work hard on the field. Coach Lambeth demanded academic and civic excellence. The players were required to attend a number of study hall hours every week based on their grade-point averages. A perfect 4.0 required 10 hours, while anything less required increasingly more. The players also met with Coach Lambeth each week to discuss how their classes were going and what kind of grades they were earning. As a result, a third of the team is expected to hold a 4.0 GPA this semester, and most of the team members are expected to

appear on the UHV Dean's List for the spring semester.

As Coach Lambeth always tells her players, "We're not just here to play sports. We are here for an education first and foremost."

As part of their civic activities, the players participated in a mentoring program in which they tutored at-risk elementary school students in reading, and middle and high school students in remedial math. The players also served as role models and life coaches to these students. Many players put in hours above and beyond what was required by the mentoring program.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to formally congratulate the women of the Jaguars on their accomplishments, both on and off the softball field, in their historic first season. I would also like to insert the Jaguars roster into the of the team into the Congressional Record: Jessica Salas, Erin Litvik, Samantha Campagna, Kristen Lindley, Curby Ryan, Lindsey Ferguson, Lauren Garza, Chelsi Fitzgerald, Kasey Voyles, Cayla Dluhos, Ashley Falco, Stephanie Lavey, Amber Scott, Whitney Damborsky, Brittany Faas.